

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 03282 071600Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-05 AID-05 /022 W
-----097537 080947Z /11

R 071406Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8305
INFB AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
DEA HQS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 3282

ANKARA AND PARIS FOR DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, JO, SY
SUBJ: DEA EXECUTIVE OBSERVATION PROGRAM-SYRIA/JORDAN

REF: AMMAN 4961

1. EMBASSY DAMASCUS SUPPORTS POSITION REFTEL AND RECOMMENDS
DEPARTMENT RECONSIDER ITS REJECTION OF JOINT SYRIAN/JORDANIAN
PARTICIPATION IN DEA EXECUTIVE OBSERVATION PROGRAM. COL.
COUSSA IS NOT MIDDLE LEVEL OFFICER AND SYRIA IS
SHOWING GREATER RECEPTIVITY TO COOPERATION WITH US IN
SUPPRESSION OF INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKING.

2. COL. COUSSA, IN ADDITION TO DUTIES OF OVERALL SUPERVISION
OF DRUG SQUAD, ALSO SUPERVISES COUNTERFEITING, INTERPOL
LIAISON AND OTHER ASPECTS OF POLICE INVESTIGATIONS, AND
SHARES RESPONSIBILITY WITH OTHER OFFICES FOR FOREIGN MISSION
SECURITY. HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR IN MINISTER OF INTERIOR.

3. EMBASSY IS MAKING SLOW BUT STEADY PROGRESS WITH
SYRIANS ON ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS. DEA REP MARIA
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FROM PARIS HAS ALREADY RAISED POSSIBILITY OF EXECUTIVE
OBSERVATION PROGRAM WITH COL. COUSSA. TO WITHDRAW OFFER
DUE TO HIS SUPPOSED LACK OF SENIORITY WOULD NOT BE UNDER-
STOOD OR ACCEPTED HERE. DESPITE POLITICAL UPS AND DOWNS
OF BILATERAL RELATIONS, COL. COUSSA IS A LEADER AMONG THOSE
IN SYRIA WHO WANT TO SEE COOPERATION THAT HAS DEVELOPED TO
DATE CONTINUE AND EXPAND. WE FEEL THAT SYRIA HAS POTENTIALLY

IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN ANTI-NARCOTIC EFFORTS AS TRANSIT POINT FOR LEBANESE AND TURKISH TRAFFICKING.

4. BILATERAL RELATIONS IN MIDDLE EAST ARE MORE ON PERSONAL THAN INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL. COL. COUSSA IS THE SENIOR LEVEL OFFICIAL WE WOULD CALL UPON IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS OR ONES IN WHICH HIGH LEVEL FOCUS IS NEEDED.

5. IN ADDITION TO STRENGTHENING BILATERAL RELATIONS, JOINT SYRIAN/JORDANIAN PARTICIPATION WOULD BE PLUS FOR INTER-ARAB EFFORTS IN FIELD OF ANTI-NARCOTIC WORK.

6. IT IS OUR FEELING, HOWEVER, THAT IF DEA CANNOT ARRANGE A FIRST CLASS EXECUTIVE OBSERVATION PROGRAM THIS YEAR, IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO POSTPONE THE VISIT RATHER THAN TRYING TO PATCH SOMETHING TOGETHER WHICH PARTICIPANTS WOULD INTERPRET AS SECOND CLASS TREATMENT. WE SHOULD ALSO BE PROVIDED WITH A MORE SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION THAN "LACK OF SENIORITY."

PELLETREAU

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Message Attributes

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